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OLC 78-2215

5 June 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 31 May 1978 Hearing by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Subcommittee on Oversight Charied by Representative Les Aspin (D., Wis.) on the Subject of Narcotics

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1. [ ] On 31 May 1978 the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Subcommittee on Oversight, chaired by Representative Les Aspin (D., Wis.) held a hearing on Narcotics in Room H 405, The Capitol. The hearing lasted from 2:25 until 4:15 p.m. The Committee took care of security and a transcript was taken.

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2. [ ] Members who attended the hearing were Chairman Aspin and Chairman Edward P. Boland (D., Mass.), House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

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3. [ ] The following members of the Committee staff attended the hearing: Loch Johnson, Pat Long, Bernard Raimo, Herbert Romerstein, Diane LaVoy, Richard Giza, Mike O'Neil and Catherine Wilson.

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4. [ ] The witnesses were [ ], Special Assistant for the Coordination of Foreign Narcotics Intelligence and [ ], Chief, Covert Action Staff. They were accompanied by [ ], Assistant Legislative Counsel.

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5. [ ] delivered a thirty minute explanation of the world-wide Narcotics problem, the Intelligence Community's response to that problem, the respective components of the CIA which contribute to coverage on Narcotics and legal encumbrances. [ ] gave the Committee a five minute rundown on the role of covert action, particularly propaganda, in the Narcotics field. These presentations were very thorough and gave the Committee a good appreciation for the subjects covered. Representative questions from the Members and Committee staff were as follows:

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(a) Chairman Boland inquired into the relative strength of Headquarters vs. overseas personnel working

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on the Narcotics problem and exploring in some depth the inner relationships between CIA and DEA, both in Headquarters and the field. He also probed for the rationale behind CIA's involvement in the foreign collection of Narcotics information and seemed to be satisfied with the response that DEA and CIA collaborate extensively and that CIA is doing work which DEA is precluded by charter from performing. Chairman Boland read some excerpts from a DEA report in which the authors were rather critical of CIA's work in the Narcotics field but seemed to be satisfied with [ ] explanations that the difficulties cited were well in the past.

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(b) Chairman Aspin asked several questions and after hearing the responses summed up CIA's activity by saying "CIA gathers intelligence and then turns it over to someone else who can do something about it. If no subsequent action is taken then CIA might try to help it along via covert action means and then check up on what has been done." [ ] indicated that this was a fair resume of CIA's role in the Narcotics field. Chairman Aspin closed his questioning by probing into the degree to which the Narcotics problem is or is not growing and whether CIA's and the U.S. Government's efforts have been and are being effective. Chairman Aspin concluded with the observation that working with the host governments either via CIA or DEA is probably the major means by which the Narcotics problem can be controlled.

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(c) Loch Johnson explored: a battery of past activities of CIA in the Narcotics field; the possibility of crop substitution; aerial surveillance against [ ]; and the degree to which CIA may or may not exercise benign neglect of the Narcotics problem in the Golden Triangle. He seemed to be largely satisfied with [ ] responses to all of the foregoing question areas. The Committee, through Loch Johnson, requested that we provide them with a copy of the letter to Senator Charles H. Percy (R.. Ill.) on the 1974 legal case regarding a [ ] This is the only outstanding requirement.

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Assistant Legislative Counsel

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